

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 JUSE-00

NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-03 OMB-01

AID-05 IGA-01 DODE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 /052 W

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P R 150811Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 440

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2958

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJECT: BURMA ARMY OPERATIONS AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. ALL BURMA NEWSPAPERS HELD ACCOUNTS OF BURMA ARMY OPERATIONS AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS ON OCTOBER 15. THE ARTICLES, OF WHICH DETAILS FOLLOW, WERE SUPPORTED BY FRONT PAGE MAPS AND PHOTOS, DEPICTING RESPECTIVELY AREAS OF OPERATIONS AND CONFISCATED GOODS AND EQUIPMENT. PRINTED SUMMARIES WERE SUPPLEMENTED BY BURMESE AND ENGLISH RADIO BROADCASTS.

2. THE ARTICLES DETAILED THREE SEPARATE MAJOR OPERATIONS AGAINST SEVERAL OF THE TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS. THE MOST RECENT OPERATION, CONCLUDED ONLY DAYS AGO, WAS MOUNTED AGAINST THE SHAN UNITED REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (SURA) AND THE REMNANT 3RD KUMMINTANG, ALSO KNOWN AS THE 3RD CHINESE IRREGULAR FORCES. IN MID-SEPTEMBER, REACTING TO INFORMATION ON THE LOCATION OF A REFINERY, TROOPS OF THE 77TH DIVISION AND OTHER UNITS MOVED AGAINST PAN PI VILLAGE AND OVERRAN THE REFINERY SITE. FOUR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE TRAFFICKERS TOOK PLACE DURING THE OPERATION, RESULTING IN MODERATE CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES (TWO SOLDIERS AND
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THREE TRAFFICKERS KILLED). THE RAID NETTED 300 GALLONS OF OPIUM

SOLUTION (A STAGE IN THE REFINING PROCESS WHERE RAW OPIUM IS BEING PROCESSED TO MORPHINE BASE) AND REFINERY EQUIPMENT. THE ARMY ALSO CONFISCATED 10,505 M-1 ROUNDS, 21,955 M-16 ROUNDS, 1,000 7.9MM ROUNDS, 134 HANDGRENADES, 29 M-18A MINES, 27 M018A-1 MINES, ONE M87A-2 ROCKET LAUNCHER AND MINE LAYING EQUIPMENT.

3. DURING APRIL 1975, AT A LOCATION APPROXIMATELY 75 MILES NORTH OF THE SITE OF THE SEPTEMBER OPERATION, EASTERN COMMAND FORCES AND BURMA AIR FORCE ATTACKED A CARAVAN BELONGING TO THE SHAN UNITED ARMY (SUA) (ONE OF THE CHIEF TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS IN BURMA). THE CARAVAN CONSISTED OF OVER 300 MULES CARRYING OPIUM AND JADE, ESCORTED BY MORE THAN 400 ARMED GUARDS. THE ATTACK NETTED 800 VISS (1312 KILOGRAMS) OF RAW OPIUM AND LARGE QUANTITIES OF JADE; 10 TRAFFICKERS WERE CAPTURED.

4. THE OTHER OPERATION, CONDUCTED BY NORTHEAST COMMAND UNITS IN JUNE 1975, WAS TARGETED AGAINST NORTHERN SHAN STATE REFINERIES OPERATED BY THE SUA. THE ATTACKS ON THE REFINERIES LED TO THE SEIZURE OF 65 KILOGRAMS OF NUMBER FOUR HERION, 100 VISS (164 KILOGRAMS) OF RAW OPIUM, AND 500 GALLONS OF OPIUM SOLUTION FROM TWO SEPARATE REFINERIES.

5. THE ARTICLES CONCLUDED BY REPORTING THAT THE SUA PRESENTLY IS ESCORTING A CARAVAN OF MORE THAN 200 MULES LADEN WITH OPIUM AND JADE NEAR KENGKAM, CENTRAL SHAN STATE, AND BURMA ARMY UNITS ARE IN PURSUIT. OVER 600 MEN BELONGING TO THE SURA AND 3RD KMT, ESCORTING 400 MULES ARE FLEEING SOUTH ACROSS THE SALWEEN RIVER TOWARD THAILAND. OVER 400 KACHIN INDEPENDENCE ARMY (KIA) ARE STRANDED IN CAMPS AT THAM NGOP AND PIANG LUANG, THAILAND; ARE IN POSSESSION OF OVER 200 KILOGRAMS OF HEROIN AND ARE UNABLE TO RETURN TO BURMA. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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6. EMBASSY HAD BEEN INFORMED BY COLONEL AUNG HTAY, CHIEF, MIS, THAT A PUBLIC ACCOUNTING OF THE PAN PI OPERATION WAS IN THE OFF-ING; WE DID NOT EXPECT WRAP-UPS ON THE OTHER TWO OPERATIONS. IN ANY CASE, ARTICLES ARE UNPRECEDENTED IN BURMESE PRESS AND, ACCORD-ING TO ALL SOURCES AVAILABLE TO MISSION, QUITE ACCURATE. SIGNIFI-CANTLY, BUT LEFT UNSAID IN PRESS, U.S.-PROVIDED HELICOPTERS PLAYED
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A ROLE IN THE SEPTEMBER OPERATION. COLONEL AUNG HTAY TOLD EMBASSY THAT THE AIRCRAFT WERE USED, PRIMARILY TO MOVE SUPPLIES AND EVACUATE WOUNDED. THAT INFORMATION HAS ALSO BEEN CONFIRMED THROUGH COLLATERAL SOURCES. END CONFIDENTIAL.
OSBORN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, DRUG TRAFFIC, PRESS COMMENTS, ARMED FORCES, DRUG SEIZURES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975RANGOO02958
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750357-0210
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751051/aaaabthh.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BURMA ARMY OPERATIONS AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED
TAGS: SNAR, BM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006